

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: MFA SPOKESMAN ON DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS VISIT

TOKYO FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS

PHIRAT ITSARASENA, CHIEF OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
PRESS DIVISION, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 1, 1974.
FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF HIS COMMENTS
ON DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS' MEETING WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN:

PHIRAT:...TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD FOR ONE
HOUR, BUT NO NOTES WERE TAKEN AT ALL BECAUSE WE KNEW OF
THE SUBJECTS TO DISCUSSED BEFOREHAND. NEWSPAPERS HAVE
PUBLISHED REPORTS OF THE SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED ALREADY.
IN OTHER WORDS, CONSULTATIONS HELD WERE ON SUITABLE AND
CORRECT METHODS FOR ALIGNMENT OF AMERICAN MILITARY AID TO
THAILAND, IN ORDER TO ENABLE US TO BECOME SELF-DEPENDENT IN
THE SAFE-GUARDING OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL PEACE AND ORDER. THIS IS BECAUSE
IT CAN BE SEEN THAT OUR THAI ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN
"BREATHING FOR THE PAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY THROUGH
AMERICAN LUNGS LENT US BY THE UNITED STATES." SHOULD THE
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"AMERICAN LUNGS" WE HAVE BORROWED HAVE TO BE RETURNED, THEN

WE WOULD BECOME LIKE A PERSON SUFFERING FROM AN ADVANCED STAGE OF TB, FINDING IT MOST DIFFICULT TO DRAW EVERY BREATH. I AM USING DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE IN THIS BRIEFING I AM GIVING YOU.

SECOND, WE ASSERTED THAT THAILAND HAS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES ALWAYS AND THROUGHOUT, THAT WE MADE AND ARE MAKING MANY SACRIFICES IN AMERICAN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY INTERESTS. THEREFORE, THAILAND WISHES TO KNOW HOW THE UNITED STATES ASSESSES THE VALUE OF OUR FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS IT. DURING THE TALKS HELD WE USED DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE AND WE SAID THAT IN PROMOTION OF FRIENDSHIP THE INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES MUST BE ADJUSTED IN ORDER TO ENSURE A PROPER BALANCE ON BOTH SIDES. IF THERE IS NO PROMOTION, HOW CAN THERE BE ADJUSTMENT? IN OTHER WORDS, IF THERE IS NO ADJUSTMENT IT MEANS THAT CLOSER TIES ARE NOT WANTED. IN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES, WE PROMOTE CLOSE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP IN ORDER TO READJUST INTERESTS ON BOTH SIDES TO ENSURE A PROPER BALANCE. FOR INSTANCE, THAILAND IS PROMOTING CLOSER TIES OF FRIENDSHIP WITH BURMA BECAUSE INTERESTS ARE NOT COORDINATED AND BALANCED. THEREFORE, WE PROMOTE CLOSER TIES OF FRIENDSHIP IN ORDER TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS AND THUS COORDINATE INTERESTS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS MEANT BY PROMOTION OF CLOSER TIES OF FRIENDSHIP?

THE LAST SUBJECT WE HELD TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS ON WAS OUR DESIRE TO SAFEGUARD NATIONAL SECURITY AND TO SAFEGUARD PEACE AND ORDER INSIDE THAILAND. THE SAFEGUARDING OF PEACE AND ORDER INSIDE THAILAND -- NO OTHER COUNTRY WAS MENTIONED -- IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE. NO INDIVIDUAL AND NO PRIVATE COMPANY SHOULD TAKE ANY PART, OR BE INVOLVED, OR HAVE ANY INTERESTS WHATSOEVER IN THIS MATTER. IT SHOULD BE A MATTER ON STATE-TO-STATE LEVEL, NOT BETWEEN A STATE AND INDIVIDUALS OR PRIVATE COMPANIES. I HAVE NO COMMENT TO MAKE ON THIS SUBJECT AND I LEAVE IT TO YOU TO PONDER OVER IT YOURSELVES. THIS IS ALL I CAN SAY.

REPORTER: COULD YOU GIVE SOME FURTHER EXPLANATIONS ON THAT SUBJECT?

PHIRAT: I CANNOT GIVE ANY EXPLANATIONS. GO AND PONDER OVER UNCLASSIFIED

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IT YOURSELVES. THIS IS ALL I CAN SAY.

REPORTER: WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID THAT THAILAND HAS MADE SACRIFICES?

PRHRAT: MANY SACRIFICES MADE IN AMERICAN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY INTERESTS, THEREFORE THAILAND WISHES TO KNOW HOW THE UNITED STATES ASSESSES THE VALUE OF OUR FRIENDSHIP

FOR IT.

REPORTER: DOES THAT MEAN THE USE OF UTAPAO, OR WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

PHIRAT: I CANNOT GIVE YOU ANY EXPLANATION. THE TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS HELD FOR ONE HOUR CAN BE SUMMARIZED THIS WAY ONLY. SHOULD EXPLANATIONS BE EXPANDED IT WOULD TAKE ANOTHER HOUR. I SUMMARIZED THIS IN FIVE MINUTES.

A SUMMARY OF THE THIRD AND LAST SUBJECT IS THAT THE SAFE-GUARDING OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND OF PEACE AND QUIET INSIDE THAILAND SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE ONLY, THAT NO INDIVIDUAL OR PRIVATE COMPANY SHOULD TAKE ANY PART, OR BE INVOLVED, OR HAVE ANY JOINT INTERESTS WHATSOEVER.

REPORTER: DO YOU MEAN BIRD AIR?

PHIRAT: PLEASE DON'T ASK ME TO GIVE YOU FURTHER EXPLANATIONS* USE YOUR OWN BRAINS.

REPORTER: COULDN'T YOU MAKE AN OFF-THE-RECORD STATEMENT?

PHIRAT: I WILL EXPLAIN IT THIS WAY. TURN BACK TO THE PAST AND YOU WILL SEE. TURN BACK TO EARLY IN 1949 WHEN JUSMAG HAD JUST COME HERE AND AN AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED THAT DATES BACK TO THE NOVEMBER 8, 1949, GOVERNMENT, DURING THE TIME OF FIELD MARSHAL PHIN CHUNHAWAN, AND THEN WHEN HE AND FIELD MARSHAL P. PIBULSONGGRAM WERE IN POWER JOINTLY. TURN BACK TO THAT TIME AND CONSIDER IT FROM THAT TIME UP TO THE PRESENT, AND THEN YOU WILL SEE THE STRUCTURE AND THE SHORTCOMINGS I AM SPEAKING OF NOW.
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REPORTER: I WASN'T BORN THEN.

PHIRAT: WHETHER YOU WERE BORN OR NOT YET THEN IS NOT AT ALL NECESSARY, BECAUSE THERE ARE BOOKS YOU CAN READ. THE UNITED STATES HAS ACCEPTED FOR CONSIDERATION THIS MATTER WE BROUGHT UP. I CANNOT GIVE YOU ANY EXPLANATION BECAUSE OF AN ORDER GIVEN ME BY MY SUPERIOR. I ASKED WHETHER I COULD GIVE AN EXPLANATION BECAUSE THE WORDING USED SOUNDS VERY VAGUE. BUT HE SAID, "I BELIEVE THAT THE PRESS WILL UNDERSTAND." SO TRY TO UNDERSTAND IT YOURSELVES BECAUSE I CAN GIVE YOU NO EXPLANATION. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT THE EXPLANATION WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS FORMULA, THAT IT CANNOT BE OUTSIDE ITS FORMULA. IT TOOK ME AS LONG AS TWO HOURS TO PLAN THIS BRIEFING. IT IS A BRIEFING WHICH

COMPLETELY COVERS RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES. BEFORE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ARRIVED AND HELD A MEETING WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI, THE LATTER BROUGHT THIS SUBJECT UP FOR CONSULTATION IN A CABINET MEETING BEFOREHAND, AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE WAS PRESENT AT THAT CABINET MEETING ALSO.

REPORTER: PLEASE MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF "LUNGS".

PHIRAT: I FEEL THAT THIS QUOTE IS GOOD. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE AMERICAN "LUNGS" WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS LENT US MASTERS

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FOR USE ONLY. IF AND WHEN IT DEMANDS THE RETURN OF ITS "LUNGS", THEN THAILAND WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BREATHE AND IT WILL BE LIKE A PERSON WHO IS SUFFERING FROM TB.

REPORTER: WHO WERE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR MINISTRY OF DEFENSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING?

PHIRAT: THERE WERE NO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE PRESENT, BECAUSE WHEN THE MATTER WAS BROUGHT UP FOR CONSULTATION IN A CABINET MEETING BEFOREHAND THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE WAS PRESENT THERE AND AGREEMENT WAS REACHED FOR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI TO HOLD TALKS AND

CONSULTATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT...

REPORTER: WHAT WAS HIS ATTITUDE? DID HE ACCEPT THE VIEWS WE EXPRESSED, OR DID HE TAKE THEM FOR CONSIDERATION?

PHIRAT: THE VIEWS WE EXPRESSED IN REGARD TO AMERICAN MILITARY AID TO THAILAND HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY HIM FOR STUDY AND CONSIDERATION. CONSULTATIONS WILL BE HELD BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES VERY SOON, BECAUSE PERSONS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL MUST KNOW WHAT THAILAND WANTS FOR CERTAIN. OTHERWISE AID MIGHT BE GIVEN US IN WAYS WE MIGHT NOT REALLY WANT SHOULD THEY NOT KNOW WHAT WE WANT FOR CERTAIN.
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WHEN TALKS ARE HELD, VIEWS AND WISHES ARE EXPRESSED VERY WIDELY, THUS MAKING IT NECESSARY FOR FURTHER TALKS AT THE LEVEL OF OFFICIALS TO BE HELD ON DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT BE ASKED WHETHER WE WANT THIS OR THAT TYPE OF WEAPONS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THIS IS WHY FURTHER CONSULTATIONS HAVE TO BE HELD AND WILL BE HELD IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE...

MR. CLEMENTS CAME HERE ONCE BEFORE, LAST YEAR, AND HE HAS COME HERE THIS TIME BECAUSE HE WISHES TO KNOW THAILAND'S REAL ATTITUDE OVER THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN BASES IN THAILAND AND OVER JOINT THAI-US INTERESTS. WE HAVE INFORMED HIM OF OUR DESIRE FOR THAILAND TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET, TO BE ABLE TO BE SELF-DEPENDENT. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND INFORMATION, WE DO NOT WANT TO BECOME LIKE SOUTH VIETNAM OR LIKE CAMBODIA, BUT ESPECIALLY LIKE SOUTH VIETNAM. SHOULD THE UNITED STATES CUT OFF ALL AID TO IT NOW, IT WOULD BE ABLE TO FIGHT FOR ANOTHER THREE MONTHS, AND THEN THAT WOULD BE THE END OF ITS CAPABILITY TO FIGHT. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE LIKE THAT. WE HAVE MADE MANY SACRIFICES JOINTLY. WE HAVE MADE MANY SACRIFICES FOR THE UNITED STATES.

REPORTER: COULDN'T YOU GIVE US GREATER EXPLANATIONS THAN THIS?

PHIRAT: I CANNOT GIVE YOU GREATER EXPLANATIONS THAN I HAVE GIVEN YOU ALREADY, BECAUSE IT IS A FACT THAT I AM ALREADY SPEAKING OFF-THE-RECORD.

REPORTER: WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES DISCUSSED?

PHIRAT: WE HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT ALREADY THAT THAT DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA. THAT IS THE POINT, ISN'T IT? WE KEEP CLOSE WATCH OVER INDOCHINA, OVER DIEGO GARCIA, OVER THE SITUATION OUTSIDE OUR COUNTRY, BUT

WE DO NOT LOOK AT OURSELVES AND MATTERS DIRECTLY CONCERNING
US. THEREFORE, SINCE MR. CLEMENTS HAS COME HERE, WE
WANT THE UNITED STATES TO BE INFORMED OF OUR VIEWS CONCERNING
OUR OWN COUNTRY, BECAUSE EVERY TIME HE CAME IN THE PAST
WE INFORMED HIM OF OUR VIEWS OVER LAOS, OVER CAMBODIA,
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OVER VIETNAM, OR OVER BURMA, OR OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN. THIS
TIME WE HAVE INFORMED HIM OF OUR VIEWS CONCERNING OURSELVES.

REPORTER:

PHIRAT: NO MENTION WAS MADE OF BASES. WE SAID WE WISHED
TO KNOW HOW THE UNITED STATES ASSESSES OUR FRIENDSHIP. BUT
I CANNOT GIVE YOU FURTHER EXPLANATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

REPORTER: DID HE MAKE ANY MENTION THAT THE BUDGET FOR
AID TO US WOULD HAVE TO BE CUT DOWN?

PHIRAT: HE DID NOT MENTION THAT AT ALL.

REPORTER: THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD THE PRESS THAT
WHEN MR. CLEMENTS ARRIVED THIS TIME HE INTENDED TO ASK FOR
AID TO SET UP AN ARMS PRODUCTION PLANT IN THAILAND. DID HE
MAKE THAT REQUEST?

PHIRAT: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARMS PRODUCTION PLANT WAS
NOT MENTIONED AT ALL, BECAUSE THAT WAS FELT TO
BE A DETAIL WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE LEVEL OF
OFFICIALS RATHER THAN AT THAT MEETING.

REPORTER:

PHIRAT: IF THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES POSSESSED
INTERESTS THAT WERE PROPERLY BALANCED, WE WOULD NOT MAKE ANY
REMONSTRATIONS, WOULD WE? ALL WE WANT IS FOR INTERESTS TO BE
EQUALLY BALANCED, FOR RELATIONS TO BE REVISED IN
ORDER TO READJUST INTERESTS AND MAKE THEM BALANCED PROPERLY
AND EQUALLY.

REPORTER: DO WE SUFFER A DEFICIT BALANCE AT PRESENT?

PHIRAT: I FEEL THAT WE SUFFER A DEFICIT BALANCE EVERY-
WHERE, REGARDLESS WITH WHAT COUNTRY.

REPORTER: WHAT REACTION DID HE DISPLAY?

PHIRAT: MR. CLEMENTS CAME HERE ONCE BEFORE, AND AFTER HE
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LEFT VARIOUS INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN THAILAND. THIS HAS MADE HIM UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT THAILAND WANTS AND WHAT IT DOES NOT WANT. THE TALKS HELD ON THIS VISIT WERE VERY FRANK AND STRAIGHTFORWARD, RESULTING IN THE TALKS AND CONSULTATIONS HELD FOR ONE HOUR BEING STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. MR. CLEMENTS AND ALL MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY ARE GOOD MEN. WE UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING THAT MR. CLEMENTS SAID, AND I BELIEVE HE HAS BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME...

REPORTER: CAN IT BE SUMMARIZED THAT THE AMERICAN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE GLAD TO GIVE AID TO THAILAND IN A MORE SYMPATHETIC MANNER?

PHIRAT: WE ARE SPEAKING OF THE ADMINISTRATION, BUT ANY DECISIONS IT MAKES WOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON APPROVAL FROM CONGRESS. WE HAVE INFORMED MR. CLEMENTS OF OUR REAL VIEWS AT PRESENT, WHICH ARE UNLIKE THOSE IN THE PAST.

REPORTER:

PHIRAT: THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN ORDER TO EXCHANGE VIEWS. I FEEL THAT HE SPOKE WITH GREAT SINCERITY AND IN A VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER. WE, TOO, SPOKE FRANKLY AND AS FRIENDS, BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO CONTINUE BEING A HEAVY BURDEN SHOULDERED BY THE UNITED STATES WITHOUT END.

REPORTER: WHEN YOU SPOKE ABOUT INDIVIDUALS, WHO DID YOU MEAN?

PHIRAT: I MEANT PRIVATE COMPANIES IN THAILAND ONLY.

REPORTER: DO YOU MEAN AIR AMERICA?

PHIRAT: I DID NOT SPEAK ABOUT ANYTHING OUTSIDE OUR COUNTRY. I SPOKE ABOUT MATTERS INSIDE THAILAND ONLY.

REPORTER: IS THAT PRIVATE COMPANY A THAI OR A "FRANG" COMPANY?

PHIRAT: THE DUTY TO SAFEGUARD NATIONAL SECURITY AND
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TO SAFEGUARD PEACE AND ORDER INSIDE OUR COUNTRY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT, OF THE STATE ONLY. AND THIS INCLUDES THE LEGISLATURE ALSO.

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